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ABSTRACT

The question of teaching a standard dialect to Chicano students who are studying abroad has implications for teaching any standard versus nonstandard dialect. The University of Colorado has a program at the Universidad Veracruzana in Jalapa, Mexico, in which the policy is to teach standard Mexican Spanish (the cultivated norm of Mexico City) as an additional dialect to those students who already speak Chicano Spanish. One technique is to provide written exercises which develop the reading and writing skills of those students fluent in Colorado Spanish. Broadly speaking, the main differences between this dialect and standard Mexican Spanish lie in different pronunciations of the same lexical items and in the use of different lexical items for the same concept. Although the syntactic patterns of the two dialects are similar, there are certain recurring syntactic patterns in Colorado Spanish which can be termed nonstandard forms, calques or anomalous forms. Various types of exercises dealing with these dialect differences are used in the composition class: dictations, "proof reading" exercises, two-page compositions, and translation exercises. Four passages from student compositions are examined in this paper for instances of nonstandard usage. (Author/CFM)

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TEACHING STANDARD VERSUS NON-STANDARD SPANISH IN A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

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The question of teaching a standard dialect to Chicano students who are studying abroad has implications for teaching any standard versus non-standard dialect at other locations. The University of Colorado has a program at the Universidad Veracruzana in Jalapa, Mexico. In this city the Chicano student is faced with standard Spanish, Chicano Spanish, elementary or near-standard Spanish spoken by Anglo students, and local non-standard Spanish. The policy which is followed within the program is to teach standard Spanish as an additional dialect to those students who already speak Chicano Spanish. This policy is made clear both to the students in the program as well as the Mexican professors who teach the language classes. In the Spring term of 1976 about one-half of the 62 students were Chicanos. The Chicano students demonstrated proficiency in Spanish ranging from fluent standard or Colorado Spanish to virtually no Spanish. An additional problem involved students who were compound bilinguals. In their case, one of the first objectives was to teach them the separation of their two languages. This, of course, involved an additional variety of language usage. Students who had a command of Spanish demonstrated language variation as shown by Mary Elizabeth Floyd in Verb Usage and Language Variation in Colorado Spanish. Different abilities in Spanish ranging from very fluent to non-existent should come as no surprise. The Southwest is complex, both geographically and socially. It is a misconception to believe that a rigid monolithic dialect is spoken all over the southwestern United States. The fact of the matter is that various dialects and

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variations of Spanish are found throughout this region.

Valdés Fallis (1976b) examines three alternatives for teaching Spanish to Spanish speakers including: (1) erradication approach, (2) biloquialism and (3) appreciation of dialect differences. We agree with her that the second alternative, the same as our "additional dialect," is the most advantageous approach. She, however, goes on to point out that, "we may have to admit that we are simply eradicators in disguise and that we do believe that there is a right and a wrong kind of Spanish." (22). Since a biloquial approach can be coupled with the preparation of teachers in the characteristics of local Spanish, we have at least dealt with the bulk of material including the standard and local varieties of Spanish. Since the choice will ultimately be up to the individual, we are not dictating that he will use standard Spanish in the barrio nor are we requiring him to use local Spanish in a formal situation.

Valdés Fallis (1976b: 20-21) mentions the disagreement among scholars as to whether or not a second dialect can be taught. An individual manipulates a number of varieties of the same language ranging from formal to intimate usage and may include various languages if he is a bilingual or multilingual speaker. Because of this ability to manipulate various types within the same language and various languages, the acquisition of a second dialect is very plausible. If it can be acquired it can be taught. The use of different varieties of Spanish by the same individuals was demonstrated by the undersigned (1964) in a study of spoken styles in Colombian Spanish.

Nasario Garcia (1976) attempts to justify the teaching of standard Spanish while using "sub-standard" Spanish as a means for acquiring the standard. Nevertheless, the tone of his article is defensive in seeming to be apologetic

about local Spanish and appearing critical of Chicano teachers and aides who reject the use of standard Spanish. His label of "sub-standard" is ill chosen since it relegates the local variety of Spanish to a secondary status. The ultimate decision of using the local dialect or a standard will not be made by the teacher but by the individual. By following a policy of teaching a standard dialect as an alternative, the choice is still left to the individual although he is required to practice standard forms during his formal course work. The argument concerning standard versus non-standard is overly simplified since it does not take into account the many possibilities of language variation typical of the Southwest. As a case in point, a compound bilingual who is dominant in English could be taught standard Spanish which, if he so chose, could then be used as the basis for learning his local variety of Spanish. It is pointless to argue the merits of teaching one variety of Spanish versus another. A solution satisfactory to both camps needs to be found and teaching the standard as an alternative seems to meet this need while the preparation of teachers can include a study of United States Spanish. The works listed in the bibliography by Teschner, Bills and Craddock (1975) can serve as the basis for presenting the characteristics of local varieties of Spanish to teachers and specialists in bilingual education.

Anderson addresses himself to the role of the teacher in a bilingual community and also argues (929) in favor of a bidialectical ability. Referring to teachers, he says "if we are not bilingual and/or bidialectical we must have acquired by direct contact or reading or both an understanding of, and full responsibility for, the local forms of the language and of intentions of speaking it." As can be seen from the above, there are strong arguments in favor of a biloquial model.

Anderson goes on to discuss the teaching of reading to non-English-speaking children. He argues the concept of using the home language to teach reading. The pedagogical problems involving reading and writing by Chicano university students are of a different type. We are faced with students who have had 12 years of schooling in English and virtually no preparation in literate skills. In other words, we are asked to teach formal composition to a student who speaks Spanish but is illiterate to a lesser or greater degree in this language. The teaching techniques which have to be developed for such an individual who is already literate in English of necessity must be different from teaching literate skills to a bilingual child.

Taking standard Spanish to mean the cultivated norm of Mexico City, how do we teach this as an additional dialect? One technique to establish the standard language as an alternative is to provide written exercises which develop the reading and writing skills of those students fluent in Colorado Spanish. As has been shown by Ross (1975) and Floyd (1976) the grammatical patterns at the command of Colorado speakers closely resemble syntactic patterns found in Mexican Spanish. If we can make broad generalizations about two dialects so complex in their structures and social characterizations we would have to say that the main differences between this dialect and standard Mexican Spanish would appear to lie in different pronunciations of the same lexical items and in the use of different lexical items for the same concept. Pronunciation differences can be seen in <u>entriega</u> (Colorado) vs. <u>entraga</u> (standard). Turning to the lexical examples <u>guajolote</u> (standard) vs. <u>ganso</u> (Colorado) both refer to a turkey. Although the syntactic patterns of Colorado Spanish and Mexican Spanish are similar, there are certain recurring syntactic patterns in Colorado Spanish which can be termed either non-standard forms, calques based on English, or anomalous forms. As is universal in dialect studies,

these appear to be less in number than local pronunciations or local lexical usages. Since they do appear to be less in number, one could develop a program to emphasize the equivalent syntactic patterns in standard Spanish. For example, the subjunctive of doubt in both Ross's and Floyd's studies appears to be absent or infrequent in this dialect. Exercises could be developed to teach this construction. In free composition special attention can be paid to this syntactic pattern or other syntactic patterns which are infrequent in Colorado Spanish. In the composition class held in Jalapa, three days a week were devoted to different types of exercises. On Monday students were given dictations, thus developing the writing skill of a selected passage which the student then had to write. In addition, another type of exercise was also presented on Mondays. These were called "proof reading" exercises (correccion de pruebas). This involved a mimeographed page filled with different types of errors. The errors, having been selected by the instructor and inserted into the text, could range from spelling mistakes to lexical mistakes to syntactic mistakes or to calques. In fact, any type of mistake can be incorporated into such an exercise. Thus, for a particular class needing more practice in spelling, a set of materials could be developed, concentrating on spelling mistakes. The advantage of such exercises is in the economy of time and the concentration on given types of errors within a paragraph or longer passage. These exercises were given as home assignments which were then presented and corrected in class by each student. Since this requires less correction of each exercise by the professor, the time saved can be used for other activities. Furthermore, since the last stage of formal writing involves proof reading, the student is led to develop his skills in this final stage.

On Wednesdays the students were required to submit a two-page composition, original in content. These were submitted in notebooks in order to maintain control over the progress of the individual. Thus, by maintaining control of these notebooks the instructor could note if a student consistently made the same sort of syntactic mistakes in the first and second weeks. If so, he was given exercises in the third week on this particular syntactic pattern. Having received a translation exercise during the previous lecture, students present the translation in Spanish to class on Friday. These Friday translations were original Spanish passages, ranging in length from a paragraph to a page, translated into English. The student was then required to translate the exercise back from English into Spanish. The advantage in having a translation exercise of this type is that all of the students are required to do the translation within the limits of the grammar and vocabulary delimited by the original work. No translation, obviously, will be the same, but there will be some similarities. Once the translations have been corrected and discussed in class they can be compared with the original text in Spanish.

It was enlightening for the students to see the style and artistic techniques of a good writer. Alternative translations which did not occur during the exercise became evident upon examination of the original text. This constant writing over a period of four months with careful attention to given types of errors as well as instilling the discipline of frequent practice and the meeting of deadlines produced a marked improvement in writing skills.

Let us now examine four short passages chosen from a set of compositions. In order to compare each of the following passages, written by a Chicano in the most advanced group, to an underlying passage in standard Spanish, we will speak of "features" of the original passages. This term refers, then, to non-standard

usages in order to avoid using the negative "errors" or "mistakes." Many of the features of the following passages include particular prepositions and spellings. Characteristic of Colorado Spanish are piensaba, piensamientos, tenían and aparecidas. Only one non-standard use of gender was found: ninguna concepción. The choice of prepositions was based on English calques: escribir de (to write about), la semajanza ellos tiene a (the similarity they have to), me vestí en ropa caliente (I dressed in warm clothes). Other syntactic features particular to the dialect of this Chicano student only included me recordé rather than recordé and no más se tenía que ir al supermercado. False cognates can be found in concepciones and paradiso. With respect to the English calques and false cognates, these features are obviously common to both the Chicano speaker and to English speaking students learning Spanish as a foreign language. Notice that the passages adhere closely to the major syntactic characteristics of Mexican Spanish. These passages are selected from a list of compositions.

First Composition

Par[1] mí, debe ser fácil escribir de[2] mi familia méxicana porque la características que me ha impresionado más de todo es la semejanza que ellos tienen a[3] mis padres (y)[4] parentela.

Sus costumbres culturales son muy aparecidas[5] a los de mis padres. En esto se pueden ver los[6] contribuciónes[7] que mi herencia méxicana ha hecho en mi vida a causa de ser nacido de mis padres, quienes tenían[8] una herencia mas fuerte. Al vivir con mis señores ha servido para reforzar mi herencia porque antes (yo)[9] no la miraba asimismo.[10]

Second Composition

Antes de venir a México piensaba[1] que no tenía ninguna[2] concepción[3] del país y su gente. Ahí[4] mis piensamientos[5] si han cambiado en estas tres semanas en México. Sí tenía concepciones;[6] ahora sé que poco sabía.

Muchos Mexicanos me preguntan, "Que piensas de Mexíco?"[7] Es muy difícil contestar esa pregunta. Yo no estoy seguro de mis piensamientos.[8] Ahora no más comienzo a acostumbrarme a este país tan diferente al mío.

De seguro no esperaba una cultura tan diferente.

Fifth Composition

Cuando amanecí esa mañana no había nada para comer en la casa. Ni vista[1] de David, mi hermanito quien estaba encargado de cocinar e ir de compras. Luego (me)[2] recordé que junto con su novia iba a assitir[3] a un casamiento todo el fin de semana.

También me había dicho que dejaría diez dólares encima del escritorio. Pues bien, sí había moneda ahí; no más se[4] tenía que ir al supermercado.

A causa que hacía frio, me vestí en[5] ropa caliente, empuje mi motocicleta de la sala, la monté y salí a la calle.

Ninth Composition

Siempre me habían dicho que las Filipinas eran islas bellas, un paradiso[1] tropical. Que[2] desilusión a[3] enfrentarme con cinco días de lluvia sin paro.[4] No servia de[5] salir del ambiente tan aburrido del cuartel, la lluvia fortalezaba[6] la calidad de gris de mi depresión. Me sentía como que[7] había pasado años lo mismo que un vago, viajando de puerto a puerto, nunca encontrando mi barco, acarretando[8] mi armario de marinero como el tallsmán[9] de mi mala suerte.

A summary of the above non-standard usages appears below with suggested alternates representing standard Mexican usages.

First Composition: (10 non-standard usages): 1. para, 2. sobre, 3. con, 4. Add, 5. parecidas, 6. las, 7. contribuciones, 8. tenían, 9. Add, 10. Omit.

Second Composition: (8 non-standard usages): 1. pensaba, 2. ningún, 3. concepto, 4. aquí, 5. pensamientos, 6. conceptos, 7. México, 8. pensamientos.

Fifth Composition: (5 non-standard usages): 1. senas, 2. Omit, 3. asistir, 4. Omit, 5. con.

Ninth Composition: (9 non-standard usages): 1. paraíso, 2. qué, 3. Omit 4. parar, 5. Omit, 6. fortalecía, 7. Omit, 8. cargando, 9. talismán.

As can be seen from the above examples, the teaching of writing to Chicanos at an advanced level comparable to third or fourth year college Spanish, involves an understanding of standard Spanish, regional Spanish, English interference and anomolous usages. Our goal as stated at the outset is to develop skills in standard Mexican Spanish as an additional dialect so that the studcnt can become biloquial. We should note, however, that we are not dealing with a simple division between a regional dialect and a standard dialect within a monolingual

Spanish speaking country. The Chicano student is bilingual to a greater or lesser extent and demonstrates characteristics that go beyond those of a regional dialect spoken in Mexico or in other parts of the Spanish speaking world. Typically, he comes from a bilingual region and his schooling has been in English. Thus, careful attention must be paid to the developing of exercises and materials which will lead to biloquialism.

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